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A Sermon

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In Memory
of the
Reverend Donald MacKenzie

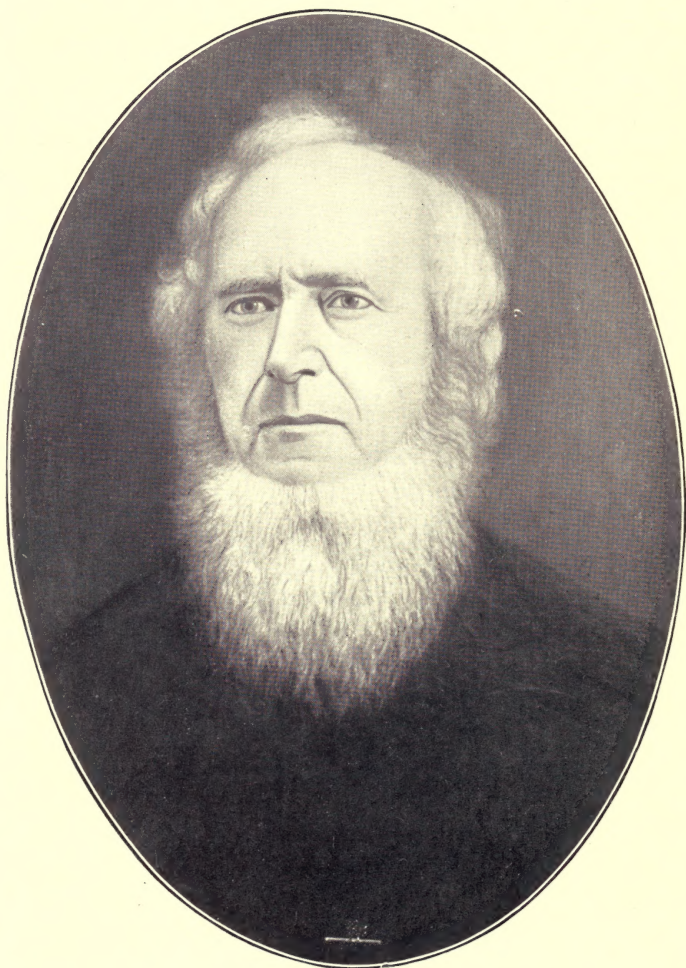
By his son

The Reverend Alexander Cameron MacKenzie

PRECAT

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THE REVEREND DONALD MACKENZIE

Embroy and Zorra Re-Union

Ontario, Canada.

AUGUST 1st to 4th
1909

Memorial Sermon

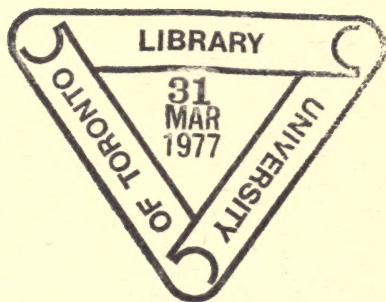
Preached on the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the arrival of
The REVEREND DONALD MacKENZIE

By His Son

Alexander Cameron MacKenzie, D.D., LL.D.

Within Knox Church, Embroy.
August 1st, 1909.

"Your fathers, where are they,
And the prophets, do they live forever."



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Introduction.

AS one of the oldest surviving associates of the late Reverend Donald MacKenzie, I endorse with great pleasure and appreciation the tribute paid to his memory and worth in the Memorial Sermon which follows.

The delicate and difficult task which his son, the Reverend Doctor MacKenzie, President of Elmira College, was requested to undertake, has been performed with admirable appropriateness, beauty of diction and good taste.

In the year 1856, I became a co-presbyter with Zorra's great pastor in the old Presbytery of London, and from that date to the time of his death in 1884, I was in close association and intimate friendship with him. He was ever marked by dignity of manner, a high sense of honor, and possessed a most companionable spirit. But it was in the pulpit he shone at his best. In opening up the mysteries of the kingdom, and setting forth the unsearchable riches of Christ, his soul became fired with the grandeur of the great redemption, and his own exalted privilege and obligation of beseeching men to be reconciled to God.

His impress on Zorra will long survive. A halo of veneration encircles his name in the memory of the people, and the remarkable number of ministers and professional men who have gone out from Zorra into all parts, not only of this continent, but of the world, have carried something of that impress with them wherever they have gone. It reached Formosa in the person of the Reverend

Doctor MacKay, the great foreign missionary. Unique indeed in every respect was the opportunity presented to the pioneer ministers of those early days, many of whom, like Dr. Bayne in Galt and Mr. MacKenzie in Zorra, not only built up a strong central congregation, but lived to see a circle of congregations formed as off-shoots from the mother charge. The teaching and preaching of these men, which under God produced such lasting and widespread results was intensely evangelical—evangelical in the sense in which Spurgeon's preaching was evangelical, and in which Livingstone's preaching at the Kirk of Shotts was evangelical. Nor did they ever halt, hesitate or suggest a caution as to the full divine authority of Holy Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Instead of Myth, the account of creation was to them as divinely true as the solid fabric of creation itself was a real fact. The patriarchs instead of being personifications of tribal names were to them real historic persons of immortal existence, which nations or tribes as such have not; and when the Saviour cites in proof of the immortality of those ancient worthies God's words to Moses at the burning bush, these fathers and founders of the church believed and taught that the Saviour's interpretation, and inference was infallibly true.

These servants of God had exalted views of Christ, and their preaching had in it the ring of certainty, and of a positive and full gospel. They honored Christ as prophet, priest and King, and they were honored by Him. The inspiration they imparted to the communities in which they labored found fitting illustration in the memorable reunion held at Embro, participation in which was to me an exquisite pleasure, holding as I do, and ever shall hold, in high veneration the name and memory of the Reverend

Donald MacKenzie. As a permanent record of that great assemblage and notable occasion, the sermon by Dr. Mackenzie will be treasured in many a home.

W. T. McMULLEN, D.D.

Pastor Emeritus of Knox Church, Woodstock,
and Ex-Moderator of the General Assembly.

Woodstock, Ont., 1910.

Memorial Sermon.

“YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY, AND THE
PROPHETS, DO THEY LIVE FOREVER?”—

ZECHARIAH 1:5.

Dear friends of earlier and later years: Those of us who are to-day among the scenes of our childhood have looked forward to this memorial service and reunion with longing expectation. You, who have remained on your native heath, can scarcely appreciate the deep feeling of gladness that wells up in our hearts as we mingle with you once again. When occupied with responsibilities incident to life's battle, we have not been without visions of childhood scenes, and childhood associates, often accompanied by the hope that we might be among them once more ere our sun went down behind the western hills of time. During our years of absence, amid sunshine and shadow, storm and calm, the influence of the ancestral homes of Zorra has been an inspirational force, arousing those moral qualities essential to honest effort. That influence, and the hallowed memories associated therewith, have in our faraway surroundings oft-times led us to sing in the silence of our hearts:

“ Though distant from home, splendor dazzles in vain,

O, give us our dearly loved ‘Zorra’ again.

A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,

Which seek through the world is not found elsewhere.”

As we approached this place, made precious by unnumbered memories, our hearts did burn within us.

There came in vision before us places now changed by the impatient hand of progress, also friends now beyond the smiling and weeping. As we drew nearer and our eyes rested on those changed yet familiar scenes, the hillside and woodland, the peaceful glen and flowing stream, the old streets, the ancient homes, and this stately sanctuary seemed to smile a welcome, to bestow a benediction of kindly greeting. During that hour of approach and arrival a tinge of sadness stole into our thought as we were told of one after another who had been gathered Home to that "House not made with hands," and at whose departure some of you sang with tender pathos:—

“ Friend after friend departs,
Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That finds not here an end.”

I would not sadden the heart of host or guest by referring to departed loved ones, remembering that

“ Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard
Their deep song of joy,
Dreams cannot picture their world so fair,
Sorrow and death cannot enter there;
Time doth not breath on its fadeless bloom,
'Tis beyond the clouds, beyond the tomb.”

In the church militant we worship this morning, with sweet remembrance of their saintly lives. In the Church Triumphant they worship to-day singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Then,

“ Let us with zeal like their's inspired,
Pursue the Christian race,
And freed from each encumbering weight,
Their holy footsteps trace.”

“YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY?”

This question has come echoing down the ages. It is a burning question in every heart with sympathies properly adjusted (true to the poles of God and to those filial impulses which lead men to honor father and mother. This question has from the dawn of human story been asked by the barbarian of the forest, the heathen philosopher of the Golden Age, the pious Jew, and the highly cultured souls of Christendom. In the text the question refers, in a particular sense, to the fathers of Israel, in a general sense it is applicable to any period or class. To us it comes this morning with appropriate fitness, as we look back upon the life, work and influence of the fathers, the founders of this far-famed and historic parish.

The national source from which any community springs largely determines the effect its descendants will have on the world's thought and activity. The advent of the Normans was the inception of Britain's dominant position as a world power. The inspirational force that has given greatness to the United States centered in English Puritanism, Scottish persistence, Irish fervor, and Huguenot devotion. Canada, the empire's fairest daughter, is winning the world's admiration through loyalty to those national principles which have made the motherland the center of highest modern civilization. This parish has attained international fame, largely by having had its original source in the land of Bruce and Wallace, Knox and Chalmers, Burns and Scott, Carlyle and Gladstone, Stevenson and Kelvin. These men and their compatriots have made the Scottish mind largely dominant in literature, and science, theology and philosophy.

From a nation of such men came the forebears of

this parish, to whom we pay tribute this morning. Truly they were indebted to the past, honorably have they discharged that debt. They came not to their new world life as men of letters, technically learned. They came more wisely and consistently equipped to aid in opening up this great country for the accomplishment of God's purpose and the fulfillment of man's destiny. They were not untutored sons of the Old Land. Most of them were trained in the world-famed parish schools of Scotland. They honored no University by bearing its degree yet an inherent concept of literature and science, theology and philosophy, tingled in their blood and sparkled in their brain, and ultimately appeared in the academic lore of their descendants. As evidence I point to the achievements of their descendants. Three-score have entered the learned professions, others became members of parliament, cabinet ministers, senators, and members of assembly, manufacturers, merchants and agriculturists.

"Fame comes only when deserved,
Then it is inevitable, for it is destiny."

KNIGHTS OF THE FOREST.

It was about 1820 that the forebears of these sons began to leave their native land, cross the deep, enter Zorra's primeval forest, and ply the gleaming axe, in the ring of which there were notes of courage, heroism and conquest. Each succeeding year marked the arrival of an increasing number until the community assumed large proportions. The early training of these heroic spirits fitted them to become the natural philosophers and practical Christians of the wilderness. Their high ideals of communal life taught them that their social status and that of their children would degenerate unless

founded on the three ancient institutions of ideal civilization, the home with its family altar, the school, influenced by religious instruction, and the church, the pillar and ground of truth. To them religion was a deep conviction of the attitude of God toward man, and what the attitude of man ought to be towards God and country.

These Celtic heroes were not the only "Knights of the Forest" who founded here that ideal communal life, which appears to-day in substantial superiority. During and subsequent to the revolutionary period, there appeared in New York and New England, sixty thousand United Empire Loyalists, who, rather than forsake the British flag for that of the United States, became citizens of what is now the Dominion of Canada. These superior people represented the noblest ancient families, the most intelligent, refined and wealthy inhabitants of New York and New England. Among them were prominent and distinguished clergymen, judges, lawyers, physicians, agriculturists, merchants, civil and military officers, manufacturers, statesmen, capitalists and persons of leisure. Their advent was to Canada a benediction, they being the cream of society, the choice element of British-American aristocracy, the best blood of the upper and most prosperous classes in the colonies, of which they had been honorable citizens. The people of Canada should never, through any form of traditional or national prejudice, lose sight of the historic fact that they are largely indebted to their southern neighbors for that moral and industrial force which has made their country the most valuable and brilliant jewel in the crown of the world's greatest empire.

Here it should be remembered that Zorra was first settled by a colony of United Empire Loyalists from what had formerly been the Brit-

ish colonies, later known as the United States. This Colony was a portion of the 60,000 referred to a moment ago. These people settled largely along what is known as the Gravel Road running north and south through Embro. In religion they were Baptists and Methodists. Previous to 1824 they had established church services, Sunday and day schools. Their ministers were the Reverend Darius Cross, Baptist, and Reverend Robert Carson, Methodist. Under the ministry of these men an extensive revival of religion took place in the year 1824 in the territory between the Governor's Road, south, and what is now Brooksdale, north. This was six years previous to the coming of any Presbyterian minister, and ten before the advent of my father. This settlement had been growing for a number of years, so that by 1829 it contained between forty and fifty families almost exclusively from the United States.

WOMANHOOD.

These Scottish and American "Knights of the Forest" were not denied the richest blessing society is heir to—womanhood in its noblest aspect of self-sacrifice and bravery. The mothers of primitive Zorra, whether from the Northland of Scotland or the Southland of North America, were a type of womanhood not excelled in any domestic or social circle that has appeared, or will appear in this or any commonwealth. They possessed that grace of strength and sympathy which enabled them to make the home life of the Forest sweet like unto the paradise life of the Garden. They are remembered even unto the second and third generation with tenderness thus expressed:—

“ Mother, oh, mother, my heart calls for you,
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossomed and faded, our faces between,
Yet with strong yearning and passionate pain,
Long I to-day for your presenee again.”

We do not presume to represent these fathers and mothers as having no faults. They would be the first to acknowledge such. Indeed, the characters which have brought the richest blessings to humanity were marked by faults, even prominent faults, but prominent only when brought into contrast with the rest of their noble lives. If there be a critic of these dwellers of the Forest, let him!

“Go to his own bosom, knock there
And ask his own heart what it doth know
That is like his brother's fault.”

CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS.

These men were in very deed the Church of God, a flock of Christ, having no under shepherd, no fold, no sanctuary. Nevertheless, He, who of old was with the Church in the Wilderness, was with them also; they knew His voice, and followed Him. For years they worshipped not in a temple made with hands, but in God's great cathedral of Nature, having heaven's blue sky for its dome, the everlasting hills for its pillars, the greensward for its carpet, and the foliage for its adornment. There they heeded the voice that spake to them out of the burning bush. “They made the place whereon they stood holy ground, the wilderness to blossom like the rose, and the solitary place to rejoice even with joy and singing.” In this spirit of intelligent devotion they built a house of worship, historically known as the “Log Church.” This edifice, erected in

1832, was used for almost two years without pulpit or pews; the seating consisted of planks laid on blocks, and no provision was made for heating. In 1833, the Synod of Upper Canada made a grant to the Presbyterians of Zorra of fifty pounds to provide a place or places of worship. One-half of this amount was used to make the following improvements on the log church:—

REPAIRS.

Pulpit quite plain, floor, four feet high, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet square; Precentor's seat, quite plain, floor, 2 feet high, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The seats to be framed or supported with scantling, the scantling to be fixed in two inch planks on the floor. The bottom of the seats to be made of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch plank, 20 inches from the floor; the back to be made of inch boards, 20 inches high; the top or book board to be made of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch cleats, six inch board with a $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch beading planted on the top and edge of book board. Gallery beams to be supported by two planks, each beam and an additional beam put in front of gallery. Posts to go through the floor and rest on stones on the ground. The gallery seats to rise each six inches, and the pulpit windows to be made ten inches higher, $\frac{1}{2}$ of each of present windows, to be taken out and put in Gallery gable and others to be put in their place with an additional pane in height. Gallery floor to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch, feathered and grooved. Stairs to be made of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch boards. Step 12 inches broad and seven inches high and newel post of stairs to rest at bottom on a plank.

THE OLD KIRK.

The other half of the fifty pounds was applied to the building of a church in Embro, historically

known as the "Old Kirk," and this building was used as a place of worship from 1836 until the edifice in which we are assembled was built and dedicated.

I am sure you will bear with me while I read the minutes of a meeting held in "the Log Church," August 30th, 1833.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CONGREGATION OF ZORRA, AUGUST 30, 1833.

At a meeting of the Trustees or Delegates, appointed by the people at a general meeting to concert and arrange measures connected with Presbyterian Churches in the township of Zorra held at the Log Church, situated on the 7th concession of said township,

The following resolutions were moved and adopted and sanctioned by said trustees:

1. That the money granted by the Synod of Upper Canada (viz: fifty pounds currency) to assist in building a place of public worship in the above mentioned township shall be drawn as soon as the trustees shall see it necessary.

2. That the one-half of the above mentioned sum of fifty pounds shall be used to assist in building a frame church on the fifth concession of Zorra and twelfth lot, in the village of Embro, and the other half to finish the Log Church situated on the Seventh Concession.

3. Moved, agreed to, and sanctioned, that when the majority of the members or supporters of the Presbyterian congregation of the Township of Zorra shall see it necessary, through increase of population or any other sufficient cause, to build an additional place of worship, that it shall be so.

4. That the site of the intended (if necessary) House of Worship mentioned in the 3rd resolution shall be chosen by a majority of the members and supporters of the Presbyterian congregation of Zorra.

5. That the balance of the twenty-five pounds (being the half of the money granted by the Synod) after finishing the Log Church on the seventh concession (in a sufficient manner), shall be applied to building the frame church on the fifth concession at Embro. Likewise that all subscriptions not paid in previous to this date (although subscribed for finishing the Log Church on the seventh concession) shall be paid and appropriated to the building of the frame church at Embro.

6. That the specification of the church at Embro shall be made out by the Trustees.

7. That a man shall be appointed by the Trustees for the purpose of going through the township with a subscription list for building the church at Embro. Likewise, that the man so appointed shall be paid (at discretion of the Trustees) out of the funds of the church.

8. That the minister shall be appointed by the majority of the congregation.

9. That the congregation at large is bound to see him paid.

10. That the annual election of Trustees shall take place.

11. That any of the annexed subscribing Trustees who may act, speak or deviate from the foregoing resolutions shall be subjected to the penalty of one pound (Halifax currency).

In token of our consent to the foregoing resolution we here subscribe our names:—

Hector Ross, President.
Donald Matheson, Clerk.
James Fraser
Alexander Matheson
George McDonald
James Sutherland
Angus McKay
Alexander McKenzie

John McKay, Treasurer.
Alexander Ross, Constable.
Robert Ross
Donald McKay
James Munro
John McKay
Robert McDonald
Donald McPherson

Beloved, such were they who dwelt here of old.
They have their reward, we believe, amid the inef-
fable bliss and ethereal glory of the better land.

“Quenched are their fires, the drifting smoke
Has vanished in the autumn haze,
Gone, too, O, Zorra, those virtuous folk
Who loved thee in the olden days;
But for their sakes, their lives serene,
Their loves, perchance, as sweet as ours,
Oh, be thy woods for aye more green,
And fairer bloom thy flowers.”

THE PROPHETS.

The text contains a second question:—“The Prophets, do they live forever?” It has general reference to the religious teachers, the gospel ministers of any period. It includes those we have in mind this morning the ambassadors of Christ, who first unfurled the banner of the cross amid the wilds of Zorra. They do live forever, amid the glories of the heavenly world. They heard and heeded Him who said, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me shall never die.” They were few in number. Through great stretches of almost uninhabited territory they journeyed, guided by the Indian trail or by the axe blaze on the trees. They left the land whence came those to whom they would minister. Not that they loved home and

country less, but that they loved Christ and their expatriated countrymen more. With this great purpose of love and sacrifice in heart, they set sail and piloted by the God of the deep arrived at the place of their life work.

According to Canadian Church history, the first Presbyterian clergyman who conducted services in Zorra was the Rev. Andrew Bell, who had distinguished himself in Scotland as an author. He arrived September 30th, 1830, remained three days and preached to sixty families. Between Mr. Bell's visit and 1832 the "Log Church" was erected, but no sermon was preached by a Presbyterian minister until 1834, seventy-five years ago this month. In that primitive church, void of dome or spire, cushion or carpet, vested choir or pealing organ, fathers, mothers and children were wont to chant, amid the holy calm of the sacred day:—

“How lovely is Thy dwelling-place
Oh, Lord of Hosts to me,
The Tabernacles of Thy grace
How pleasant, Lord, they be.”

THE FIRST PASTOR.

As God of old ordained the babe of the bulrushes to minister to His people, so He ordained a babe from a Scottish home to minister to these of later times. On August 28th, 1798, one hundred and eleven years ago, a child was born to a family of godly ancestry, which ran back far into Scottish history. That child, a boy, was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Early he exhibited a godly disposition and rare mental acumen. At sixteen he became a school teacher. For several years he taught and studied; later he entered the University

of Aberdeen and finished his classical education. Afterwards he entered Edinburgh Divinity School, studied under the famous Dr. Thomas Chalmers, and in due time was graduated. After graduation, preferment was at his disposal in the National Church of Scotland, but he was unsettled as to the path of duty. Possessing well-balanced judgment as well as deep piety, he was cautious in making a decision. He was convinced that God would hear and answer a special prayer for guidance. Thus assured he went at evening time to a place apart to pray.

To that night prayer came an immediate and intelligible answer. A brilliant light filled his inner life. He heard a voice saying, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He arose from his knees, in perfect mental and spiritual balance went home, told his mother, but no other mortal for forty long years. With such emphasis did God commission and confirm the first pastor of this Church, the Reverend Donald MacKenzie. Immediately thereafter the Synod approached him with a request that he depart far hence to Canada. His prompt response led to his early ordination by the Presbytery of Dingwall, April 16th, 1834. The ordination sermon was preached by Dr. MacDonald of Ferintosh, Scotland's then greatest preacher, who unconsciously, but no doubt under the guidance of God, chose the text,—“Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

HIS ORDINATION.

“At the church of Tain, the fifteenth day of April, eighteen hundred and thirty-four, the Presbytery of Dingwall, being met under the sanction and with the permission of the Synod of Ross, and constituted by the Moderator, Sederunt with him

Messrs. John MacDonald, Alexander Flyter, David Tulloch and John Noble.

“The Presbytery, having taken into consideration a request from the Synod’s Committee, that they proceed to the ordination of Mr. Donald Mackenzie, the Synod’s missionary, in presence of Synod agreed thereto, and appointed that Mr. MacKenzie be ordained in the church of Tain on Wednesday, the sixteenth day of April, current, and that Mr. John MacDonald preach and preside on the occasion. The Presbytery then adjourned to meet to-morrow at eleven o’clock within the Church of Tain, under the sanction of the Synod and for the above purpose.”

“At the Church of Tain, the sixteenth day of April, eighteen hundred and thirty-four, the Presbytery of Dingwall, being met and constituted by the Moderator, Sederunt, with him Messrs. Hector Bethune, John McDonald, Thomas Munro, Alexander, Flyter, David Tulloch, John MacKenzie and John Noble, proceeded according to their resolution of the last meeting to the ordination of Mr. Donald MacKenzie.

“Mr. John McDonald preached an appropriate discourse, from Acts XXII, v. 21, having put the usual questions prescribed by act of Assembly, and Mr. MacKenzie having given satisfactory replies, having also produced certificates of his having qualified to government, and having signed the formula, and come under the usual engagements, he was solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, as the Synod’s missionary in Upper Canada.

“Thereafter, he was suitably exhorted by Mr. McDonald and the service was concluded by singing of Psalms and the benediction.

“Extracted on this and the preceding page from

the Minutes of the Presbytery of Dingwall, at Dingwall, this twenty-first day of May, eighteen hundred and thirty-four by

“(Signed) WILLIAM GLASS Plu: Cls.

FROM SCOTTISH TO CANADIAN HOME.

After preparations were completed, Mr. MacKenzie bade farewell to home and native land. Of the parting he wrote in his diary, “The experience is too sacred to commit to paper, but it is indelibly written on the tablets of my heart.” Think not that it meant no sacrifice to sever ties of domestic affection, social advantages, ecclesiastical preferment, professional possibilities, and country, the trials and triumphs of which had in part been written in the blood of his ancestors, that Christ’s crown and Scotland’s covenant might be kept inviolate. The sacrifice was great from the viewpoint of ambition, but ambition was crucified and Christian manhood prevailed. Methinks I hear his heart meditations that first lone night at sea,—

“I stand alone at midnight on the deck,
And watch with eager eyes the sinking shore
Which I may see, it may be, nevermore,
For there is tempest, battle, fire and wreck,
And ocean hath her share of each of these;
Then who can say that evermore these feet
Shall tread thy soil, O Scotia, Who can say,
That evermore this heart of mine shall greet
The loved to whom it sighs adieu to-day;
My sail is set for countries far away,
My sail is set, and there is no retreat.”

After weeks of sailing, he arrived in New York, and at once proceeded to Toronto. On the first Sabbath after his arrival, he preached there. Of the fruit which his sermon bore he never learned. Sixty

years later it was made known to me by an old man, who with eyes filled and voice trembling, said,—“In 1834 I was a wild young man, but always attended church. On a Sabbath morning, your father preached from the text, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” During the following thirty years I lived a reckless life in Canada and South America. During my wanderings, I scarcely ever went to sleep without a vision of Mr. MacKenzie in the pulpit as he told us that the God of Israel and of Scotland would be with us in this new land, that He would never forsake us.” The old man with deep emotion added—“He never forsook me His messenger and His message followed me all my reckless years. By divine grace, I was brought into the Kingdom. That text, that sermon, that minister, I will remember throughout eternity.” Beloved, Kings, and Empires, nations and governments may change and pass away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever. It is the dark world’s lamp, humanity’s light.

For months, nay for years, the fathers and mothers of Zorra had waited, worked, and worshiped, praying always for the appointed of God to come to them. On a sultry day in August, 1834, my sainted father arrived at the home of Squire Gordon, where he was received with hospitality, that rejoiced his lonely heart. In addition to his credentials from the Church of Scotland, he presented the following letter from the gentleman who afterwards became familiarly known in Canada as the Honorable Isaac Buchanan:

Toronto, 13th August, 1834.

Mr. D. Matheson,

Dear Sir:—Let me introduce to you the Reverend Mr. MacKenzie, arrived this year in Canada. Will

you tell Mr. MacKenzie the circumstances of your Zorra Kirk, and what prospects a minister of the Kirk would have of a comfortable settlement in it.

I am,

Your most obedient servant,

ISAAC BUCHANAN.

To fully present his subsequent service of half a century to this parish and province, as pastor active and emeritus, would be a task too delicate and difficult for me. Nor would I undertake the present limited reference did I not know that my father's memory is greatly revered, nay, enshrined in the heart of this church. Although it was Zorra he first visited in Western Canada, he was not officially appointed thereto. He was under contract to the Church of Scotland to look after its interests for three years, unless he should choose to become a settled pastor, in which case the contract would be dissolved. Although he frequently ministered in Zorra during 1834 and 1835, he also preached almost daily in territory extending from Oxford to the Detroit River, journeying on horseback.

HIS CALL AND INDUCTION.

In 1835, he accepted a call from this parish, which during the remaining half hundred years of his life proved to be his first and only ecclesiastical love. The call, with the signatures thereto, I incorporate as an item of historic interest.

Zorra, 30th of January, 1835.

“We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the Townships of Zorra, Nissouri and Oxford, in connection with the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, hereby unanimously give a call to the Reverend

Donald MacKenzie, preacher of the gospel, and bind and oblige ourselves to pay him as our Pastor, the sum of ninety pounds sterling yearly."

John Frazer
Donald MacPherson
John Sutherland
James Fraser
George Matheson
George Murray
Finlay McDonald
William McKay
Alexander Murray
Donald Sutherland
John Murray
Alexander Murray
Robert Sutherland
James Munro
Walter McKay
John Ross
James McLeod
John McDonald
George Sutherland
James McKay
H. McDonald
Robert Ross
John Calder
Angus McKay
Robert Munro
Peter McKay
Hugh Gordon
Alexander Sutherland
Alexander Matheson
Adam Ross
George Murray
Angus McKay
Angus McKay
George Ross
Donald Ross
Alexander Ross
William Campbell
Alexander McKay
Angus Murray
John McKay
Andrew Ross

William Gordon
D. Matheson
Hector Ross
Robert Matheson
John Forbes
David Ross
John McKay
Alexander McKay
John Barclay
Alexander Kennedy
James McDonald
Hector Sutherland
Andrew Gray
William McKay
Hugh McKay
Alexander McKay
David Ross
Donald Campbell
John Sutherland
Hector McKay
Hugh Murray
Andrew Ross
Robert Lesly
Donald Munro
William Murray
John McDonald
Hugh Sutherland
John Ross
Robert McDonald
Robert Sutherland
Alexander McKenzie
Alexander McKay
Angus McKay
William Sutherland
Benjamin McIntosh
Alexander Rose
Alexander Sutherland
David Murray
John McKay
James Mackey

His induction in June 11th, 1835, was by the Presbytery of Toronto, within the bounds of which this district was then included. While this dissolved his contract with the Church of Scotland, it did not relieve him from ministering, in addition to his parochial duties, to what is now Western Ontario.

THE FIRST SESSION.

In September, 1835, Zorra's first session was elected, consisting of Robert Matheson, Alexander Munro, Hector Ross, Alexander Rose, George Mackay, William Mackay, John Mackay, Alexander Matheson, men of strict integrity and godly living. To their memory, well might we sing as did Bishop Heber of the Apostolic band:

“A glorious band, a chosen few,
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew
And mocked the cross and flame.

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain,
O, God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.”

Thus officially equipped with minister and elders, yes, and God-fearing communicants, this church began that history, which under a kind Providence, has made it famous. Truly their descendants are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses unseen who during their earthly pilgrimage looked unto Jesus as the author and finisher of their faith:

“O, blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine,
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.”

HIS STRONG PERSONALITY.

Communities, churches, nations that have impressed the world, have in every instance been dominated in their inceptive period by some strong personality that gave complexion to their future. William, the Conqueror, infused into the sluggish blood of Old Britain new life that makes her what she is; John Knox made the Church of Scotland a world-power in spreading religion and education; William Lyon MacKenzie, once called a rebel, now regarded as one of the fathers of this country, broke the family compact, secured popular rights and made possible a monarchized democracy, perhaps the most acceptable form of government the world has yet tried. These achievements would have been impossible, had not the people in each instance appreciated the advantages inherent in the policy of Conqueror, Reformer, and Patriot. It is only by transparent co-operation between a leader of strong personality, and a people of progressive ambition that community, church, nation or parish can win wholesome fame and influence. Never has this principle been more fully exemplified than by this parish in its loyalty and loving co-operation with its first pastor. This fact is confirmed by its past history, the achievements of its sons, and its present position in the Church. That its first pastor possessed strong influence, broad culture, and deep piety, is confirmed by a great cloud of witnesses gone beyond, who, with joy and gratitude, would join with us this morning in singing:—

“Long, long years the glorious story
Of that scene on Calvary’s brow
Hast thou told in pleading accents,
Though thy lips be silent now.

Many souls now call thee blessed,
Who for half a hundred years,
Preached the word in prayerful patience,
Helped the soul-sick, soothed their fears.”

There also remains a great company of witnesses, who still feel the guiding of his influence. As they now behold him through the vista of years, his personality looms up with a grandeur that is inspiring. Age and experience enable them to discover in his character those forces that gave courage to the aged, ambition to the young, and high ideals to all. I was told by a man in Chicago, a stranger to me, that it was Mr. MacKenzie’s influence over fifty years ago that aroused him to realize life’s meaning and mission. After service in a church in Boston a man whom I had never seen, learning who I was, declared that in London in 1843 the preaching and personal influence of the minister of Zorra, reclaimed him from unbelief, to saving faith in Christ. After preaching in one of the great churches in New York, a man far advanced in years spoke to me as follows:—“I saw in the Herald last night that you were to preach here. I came twenty miles to see if you were a son of Mr. MacKenzie of Zorra.” On receiving an affirmative reply, he continued,—“What I am and hope to be, I attribute to your father’s influence sixty years ago. His application of scripture truth gave me a grasp of those principles that have stood by me in the losses and gains of the years.”

HIS GREATER PARISH.

The original parish to which my father ministered was almost twenty-five miles square, now including five parishes, Thamesford, Harrington, Kintore, Brooksdale and Burns, all gracious daughters of this

Mother Church, each partaking of her honorable heritage. The greater parish of which he was "Bishop" extended westward to the Detroit River, South to Lake Erie, and North to Lake Huron. For many years he ministered within it, visiting, administering baptism, celebrating the holy communion, performing marriages, establishing churches, ordaining elders, and preaching not only on the Sabbath, but times without number, on week days. Of him it might be said as of the Apostle of the Gentiles,—“In journeyings often in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils of the wilderness, and that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” The latter filled a large place in his thought; his foresight led him to believe that the planting of churches was the surest way of preventing religious indifference, intellectual apathy, and physical torpidity. He knew that in the development of wholesome communal life the church had always preceded the school. Education, sacred and secular, he recognized as essential. His appreciation of secular learning never led him to place it above religious education. Yet he felt that

“ Learning is a fountain pure,
Out from which all glory springs.”

Traveling over this greater parish exposed him to many perils, nevertheless, the promise, “There shall no harm befall thee” was fulfilled times almost innumerable in his varied wilderness journeyings. The following was one of his trying experiences:—In Autumn 1836, while journeying through a dense wood west of London, night came on, he missed the trail which he had been following, so that he dared not proceed. He knew of no settlement or dwelling

near, and surrounded by dense forest, in danger of wild beasts, he prepared to spend the night under such protection as heaven provided. After making his horse secure, wrapping himself in his Scotch plaid, meditating on the 91st Psalm, and committing himself in prayer to God, he was about to fall asleep. At that moment a voice from the darkness addressed him. He knew not whether uttered by friend or foe, yet relying on promised protection, he answered promptly. The pilgrim of the night proved to be a good Samaritan, passing that way, who guided rider and horse to his home; under its roof he installed both to prevent their exposure to the tenants of the wood. That good Samaritan was a godly German of whom my father spoke in later years as "A man mine equal, my guide and acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of the Lord in company."

HIS LOVED GLENNESS.

There was another phase of this ambassador's life which he enjoyed in the quiet of his own home. While still unmarried and soon after becoming pastor, he founded his enchanting country place "Glenness," with its modest mansion, and broad acres, its flowing stream and peaceful Glen, its rugged hillside and stately trees; there after weary travels he betimes

"Rested on his oars, and not a sound did fall
To interrupt the stillness of his peace."

To this sweet resort the parents and children of his loved flock repaired, assured of spiritual instruction, kindly encouragement, and inspiration to higher attainment. In 1838, he brought his bride to

Glenness, to share with him the happiness and responsibility of life. She was a help-meet indeed, of loving heart, refined and cultured mind, of gracious bearing toward all, to husband, family and friends.

“ She was the rainbow to the storms of life
The golden beam that smiled the clouds away.”

“ Lovliest of women, heaven was in her soul,
Beauty and virtue forever shone around her.”

The master and mistress of Glenness not only received with gladness their parochial friends, but many others, whose society was a delight to their cultured minds. Many of these were men and women whose names are still household words in this province. President and Mrs. Willis of Knox College, Canon and Mrs. Betridge of old St. Paul's, Woodstock, Honorables Isaac Buchanan, George Brown, and Sir Francis Hincks, The Reverends John Fraser, Daniel Allan, Daniel and Mrs. Gordon (parents of Ralph Connor), William C. Burns, and Dr. W. T. and Mrs. McMullen of Woodstock; College and University men in large numbers, and many other notables of those days. The unaffected dignity, broad culture and gracious mien of those refined people make much of the so-called present day polish, appear the shadow to the substance.

HIS BIBLE TEACHING IN THE HOME.

One of the helpful influences of that home was the calm, earnest, sane piety of its head. His faculty of making religion attractive in the family circle amounted to genius. He would portray the chaste English, fascinating story, exalted poetry, beautiful imagery, moral philosophy and spiritual effective-

ness of the Bible with a vividness that was sometimes thrilling.

“ How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollections present them to view,
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot that my infancy knew.”

IN PULPIT AND PARISH.

His heart always went out towards his people. His hours of pulpit preparation were hours of prayer. Sabbath morning on coming from his study after prayer for a blessing on the word to be preached, his countenance seemed radiant with inward desire and hope, which if uttered, would plead:—

“ O, Master, plant Thy word in this field of mine,
Water it, as Thou seest its need
With showers of grace divine;
So when reaping time doth come
A good harvest there will be
Of golden, garnered sheaves
For Thee, O Lord, for Thee.”

That his many prayers were answered, those whose memory is dear to you, those who came “out of great tribulation, washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” do testify.

His pastoral office he took seriously, feeling that under God he was spiritual guide to his people, responsible for their intelligent understanding of true religion, and its application to the problems of life. From home to home he went in weather foul or fair, comforting and cheering the sorrowing, encouraging the depressed, instructing the untaught, teaching gentleness, charity and Christlike living to all. He entered each home with a kindly majesty of man.

ner, as an ambassador of the King, delivered his message, and bestowed his blessing.

It was in the pulpit that the secret of his power was made most manifest. His sermons were clear, simple and scholarly, including definite instruction, and temperate persuasion. From the pen of an ex-moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, came these words:—"The reading of the sermon by your sainted father has been a great pleasure and inspiration to me. It was as a voice from heaven. Every point of the sermon is proved by an ample quotation from scripture, giving it the air of divine authority. Such sermons would arouse no uncertainty in the minds of the hearers, but would guide them, to a sure foundation on which to build for time and eternity." An author who knew and loved him much, thus writes of his pulpit ministrations;—"He was a man of commanding appearance, tall, erect, with kingly brow. His majesty of mien and elevated tone of thought gave him weight of personality. His grave and thoughtful air as he entered the pulpit and his manner of reading and offering prayer were profoundly impressive. He began his sermon with hesitancy, in a low, rich voice; as he proceeded, his manner became more animated, his matter intensely practical, and towards the close his voice swelled into a volume of most touching and impressive melody. Every faculty was kindled, his countenance glowed, his eyes flashed, the veins of his forehead stood out like whipcords; then his power was over-whelming. A breathless stillness pervaded the audience, each hearer bending forward in an attitude of rapt attention."

"Listening multitudes hung upon his tongue,
Devolving through the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods sweeter than sweetest song."

HIS DIGNIFIED HUMILITY

There were many striking characteristics in this good man's life; perhaps the most marked was humility of the most dignified type.

“Removed from towns, he ran his godly race
Nor e'er had changed or wished to change his place,
Unskillful he to fawn or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour.”

When approached, as he frequently was, to consider positions in a worldly sense more prominent, he heeded not. Again when approached, as he was, to consider a professorship, he refused to do so. Referring to these, he said, “If it is the will of God, my life work shall be confined to my present sphere.” His desire was to continue pastor of Zorra during his entire ministry, and when he closed his eyes on earthly scenes, to sleep his last sleep with those among whom he had labored.

His humility of spirit also appeared when a University desired to honor him with the doctor's degree. This with expressions of appreciation he modestly declined.

KNOX CHURCH.

The marks of appreciation that came from this flock, this church, which he loved for half a hundred years, stirred his affection more than any form of recognition that could come from the greater world of human activity elsewhere. To him the church history of Zorra fell into three distinct periods, that of the log church which began with the advent of the first godly settlers, that of the old “Kirk” in this village, which began in 1836, and that of Knox Church which dates from 1863. The work and devotion of the two former periods found dignified

expression in this massive sanctuary erected to the glory of God, and although not so intended or declared, to the memory of parishioners and pastor of simple, sincere and sublime lives.

Many footprints these good men left on the sands of time, but none of the material type which demanded more devotion and self-sacrifice than the building of this house of worship, the corner-stone of which was laid in 1861. One purpose of a memorial service is to recall historic events, around which cluster precious memories. Therefore, I quote from the records of this congregation an account of the beginning and completion of this house of the Lord.

LAYING THE CORNER-STONE OF KNOX CHURCH.

“THIS CORNER-STONE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LAID THE
20TH DAY OF JUNE, A.D. 1861, IN THE 24TH YEAR
OF THE REIGN OF VICTORIA, QUEEN
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
IRELAND.

SIR EDMUND WALKER HEAD, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

BY

THE REVEREND DONALD MacKENZIE
PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION

BUILDING COMMITTEE

DONALD McLEOD

DONALD SUTHERLAND

ALEXANDER MCCORQUENDALE

ALEXANDER MCKAY

WILLIAM MCKAY

DONALD MATHESON

JAMES SUTHERLAND

JAMES MANN, *Secretary.*

D. R. MCPHERSON, *Chairman.*

“This ceremony took place on Thursday, the 20th day of June, 1861, and was conducted by the Reverend Donald MacKenzie, pastor of the congregation, who commenced by reading a portion of the First Chapter of the Book of Haggai in the presence of a numerous and respectable assembly; a portion of the 102nd Psalm was then read and sung, and the reverend pastor engaged in prayer. In a vacancy in the stone created for the purpose was a glass bottle containing a writing, showing the names of the Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Church Building Committee, and the Trustees, and also a copy of the “Montreal Witness,” “The Toronto Globe,” “Embryo Review,” together with a number of pieces of the current coin of the day.

“The ceremony being thus far accomplished, the assembly was requested to retire to the old church so as to escape the oppressive and scorching heat of the sun, where the Reverend Mr. Straith, of Ingersoll, delivered a very excellent and impressive address.”

“Embryo, 20th June, 1861,

“D. R. McPHERSON,
Secretary.”

OPENING OF KNOX CHURCH, EMBRO.

“This interesting ceremony took place on Thursday, the 19th of February, 1863. The morning wore a disagreeable aspect, owing to a drizzling rain, but in spite of the dismal heavings of the sky and the scanty facilities for traveling, scores of sleighs might, at an early hour, be descried in the boisterous obscurity, urging their way in long lines and from all directions to the place of concourse and celebration, and for some time previous to the appointed

hour of devotional service, the noble edifice was filled to its capacity by an eager multitude of people.

"The site on which the church stands is the gift of Donald Matheson, Esquire, to the congregation.

"The services began at eleven o'clock, with a brief and fervent prayer by the venerable pastor of the congregation, who was followed by the Reverend William Meldrum of Harrington; a sermon was then preached by the Reverend John Fraser of Thamesford, from Psalm 67: verse 1.

" 'There were giants in those days' in the Canadian pulpit: among them were Ormiston, Ingles, Burns and Fraser; the latter had few peers and no superiors. His cold logic was heated by the fire of conviction; his persuasive unction was laden with edifying instruction. His choice use of English words made his style beautiful and fascinating. His eloquence was of the reserve power type, betimes culminating in a compelling climax.

"In the afternoon a large audience heard a lively and powerful address from the Reverend John Scott, of London, on Isaiah 33: 15th and 17th verses. The labors of the day appeared to be characterized by unction, vigor and solemnity. The appearance of the immense assemblage, crowding the building and listening in breathless stillness to the earnest appeals delivered from the pulpit, was affecting and sublime. The aged were there in hoary dignity, carried back in thought by the sacred associations of the day to scenes of spiritual repast in their native land, whose blessed influence can never be effaced from their recollection; and the young were there on whose shoulders are yet to rest the solemn functions of the sanctuary, when the fathers are no more on earth to direct by the sobriety of their counsels and stimulate by the Christian fortitude of example."

An evening service was commenced, and although

the night was excessively dark and rain continued to fall heavily, the church was well filled throughout. It is computed that 1400 people were assembled at each service that day in the worship of God on this happy occasion.

It was in 1835, the Reverend Donald MacKenzie became the pastor of this people. The log building in which he was formally inducted still survives, a crumbling ruin. No doubt its inner precincts were often hallowed by many a token of divine favor and revival.

In 1836, the Frame Church which has harbored the congregation for years was erected (on what was then a bare open height, commanding a noble and extensive prospect. but what is now the centre of the village), a plain, capacious structure, and associated in the minds of its former worshippers with all that is sacred and refreshing in Christian experience. But as the district advanced in population and resources, those on the outskirts began to organize themselves into separate congregations, so that in place of one large congregation, spread over more or less of several adjacent townships and holding its periodical meetings at Embro, there are now (1863), three flourishing ones composed almost entirely of original stock.

Notwithstanding the occasional slipping away of the outer angles of the population the Presbyterians under the pastoral care of Mr. MacKenzie are still a very large body with ample resources, as sufficiently indicated by the massive and elegant structure which has just been erected by their own unaided liberality.

In a material sense the completion of this sanctuary was the crowning glory of my father's pastorate—in a spiritual sense the crowning glory of his life will only be revealed by the light of eternity.

His love for the House of God and the people of God who worshipped within it, was closely akin to that with which his Master loved mankind. His prayer for this Zion, and its worshippers, finds expression in these lines—

“ Thy people for Thy blessing wait,
In Jesus’ name, at Jesus’ feet;
Here may successive thousands find
The Saviour, holy, just and kind.

Birthplace and nursery of souls,
As every year in mercy rolls,
May the crowding worshippers appear,
Maturing for Thy glory here.”

THE END.

Four years after the completion of Knox Church this generous congregation solicitous for the comfort of their minister as age began to manifest itself, persuaded him to remove from his loved Glenness to the spacious and substantial manse on yonder southern eminence, overlooking the east and south-west and from which he could behold the sheep of his flock gathering each Lord’s day unto their spiritual fold. The manse at that time was one of the most modern and massive residences in this community and was purchased from the Honorable Isaac Buchanan by John M. Ross and other trustees. There until his active ministry came to a close through the infirmities of age, he enjoyed the society, friendship and love, not only of his own kindred, but of numberless friends who with each returning day visited him. It was during the years he and his lived in the manse that he suffered the greatest sorrow of

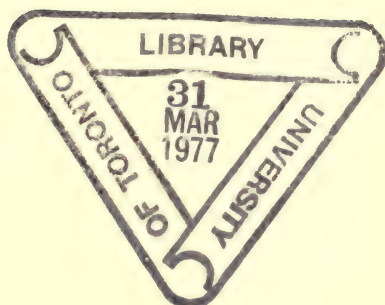
his long life in the death of his youngest son, Donald, in whom inhered many of his own best qualities—intellectual and spiritual. In the midst of this grief he applied to himself the words he so often quoted those of his flock in sorrow,—

“ Take comfort Christians when your friends
In Jesus fall asleep
Their better being never ends;
Why then dejected weep?”

The years rolled past, the evening shadows began to fall, and as they lengthened, he felt the necessity for retirement from active duties. In 1872, he resigned and became pastor emeritus. Soon afterward he removed to Ingersoll, where the evening of life was bright and calm for twelve years. In 1884 he was gathered to his fathers. His life was action; his death was peace; his last message to family and flock was triumph,—“Neither death, nor life—can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord.”

As this dying message fell from his lips,

“ God’s finger touched him and he slept.”





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